

December 21, 2022

To: The University Community

From: Robert J. Zatta, Chair, FDU Board of Trustees

Re: FDU Presidency

Dear FDU Community Members,

Earlier today, Dr. Christopher Capuano announced that he will step down as president of Fairleigh Dickinson University at the end of this month, so that new leadership can finalize the University's next strategic plan and see the plan through from start to finish, something that Dr. Capuano feels he is not fully prepared to commit to at this point in his career.

We accept and appreciate his candor and respect his decision to step down. He has certainly been a very impactful president and will be sorely missed.

Dr. Capuano has served as president since 2016 and under his leadership the University has accomplished much, including the restructuring of colleges and schools, the creation of more centers of excellence, and the successful progress of a historic capital campaign, the largest in FDU's history. In addition, he led the implementation of a major tuition reduction initiative that furthered the institution's appeal to families and students. And, of course, he led efforts to keep everyone safe during the COVID-19 pandemic, which has adversely impacted institutions of higher education around the globe since March 2020.

During President Capuano's tenure, the University also gained widespread recognition, including reaching #14 in Best Value Schools in the North region of the United States in *U.S. News & World Report's* collegiate rankings.

The University is grateful to Dr. Capuano not only for the many contributions as president, but for his exceptional service to the University over the past 37 years, including 23 years as a member of the faculty, and for his unwavering commitment to its students, faculty, alumni, and rich traditions.

As vice provost for international affairs and then provost and senior vice president for academic affairs, Dr. Capuano was responsible for developing and leading many important initiatives including the development and launching of the University's newest campus in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, which currently enrolls

nearly 1,000 students who hail from more than 50 countries and six continents. In every stage of his career at FDU, Dr. Capuano's hard work and innovative thinking have made important contributions to each of FDU's four campuses.

With a strong foundation in place, the University is well positioned to continue enhancing the value of an FDU degree, to further distinguish the University's innovative programs, and to provide even more opportunities for students to transform their lives.

I know you will join me in thanking President Capuano, and first lady Susan Capuano, for all that they have done for FDU, and wishing them well in their future personal and professional endeavors.

Moving Forward

While the Board of Trustees will now take the proper time to deliberate carefully about appointing a permanent successor, the Board has decided to name University Provost and Senior Vice President for Academic Affairs Michael Avaltroni as interim president, beginning on January 1, 2023.

Dr. Avaltroni has distinguished himself with an exemplary record of service and contribution to FDU. Since 2003, he has served the University in various capacities, including as a faculty member and chair of the Department of Chemistry and Pharmaceutical Sciences, and he was instrumental in the process to create the School of Pharmacy and Health Sciences. He took over as interim dean in 2012 and was appointed permanently to the position of dean in 2013.

Dr. Avaltroni transitioned to the position of provost and senior vice president for academic affairs in January 2022. As provost, he led the academic affairs subcommittee of the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion and Accessibility (DEIA) Advisory Council; laid the groundwork for new community college partnerships; presided over the development of the Hispanic Center (which this year had two of its programs nationally recognized by *Excelencia* in Education); and coordinated the formation of a new academic leadership team. He also was a regular presence in the community, listening and sharing ideas with faculty, staff, and students during the Provost Pop-Up events he held. He further created the Transformational Excellence Awards to honor those faculty and staff who have gone beyond the ordinary to serve our students.

An FDU alumnus, Dr. Avaltroni knows well the power of an FDU education. He graduated in 1999, receiving a B.S. in chemistry, *Summa Cum Laude*. He went on to complete an M.A. in chemistry in 2001, and a Ph.D. in chemistry in 2003, both

from Princeton University.

We are very excited about the opportunities ahead, and we look forward to supporting Dr. Avaltroni and the entire community as the University begins a new era.